

Sherbet lemons

From the sweeties.net wiki

Sherbet lemons are a British boiled sweet: a lemon shaped, lemon flavoured hard sweet with a hidden centre of fizzy sherbet powder. They are sold in most sweet shops and supermarkets.

Two sweets in one

A sherbet lemon is really two sweets. The outside is a boiled sweet with an intense, sour lemon flavour. Sealed inside is a pocket of sherbet powder. You suck the shell until it thins and breaks, and the sherbet inside meets your tongue and starts to fizz, giving a sudden burst of sharp, tangy lemon.

How the fizz works

Sherbet powder contains sugar, flavouring, an edible acid and an edible base. The acid can be tartaric, citric or malic acid, and the base is usually sodium bicarbonate, the same stuff as bicarbonate of soda, or a similar carbonate. While the powder is dry, nothing happens. As soon as it gets wet, from saliva or juice, the acid and the base react and give off carbon dioxide gas, which is the fizz you feel.

It is the same reaction as in a sherbet dip or a Sherbet Fountain. The idea goes back to the 19th century, when sherbet powders were sold to stir into water to make a fizzy drink. In 1816 a London maker called John Richards claimed to have invented his Portable Sherbet Powder.

Other sherbet fruits

The same trick works with other flavours. Sherbet limes, strawberries, blackcurrants, raspberries and oranges are all popular. In the United States, a similar sweet made in Italy is sold under the name Zotz.

In the sweet shop

Sherbet lemons are a staple of traditional sweet shops, sold loose from the jar. They are among the boiled sweets still weighed out at [the oldest sweet shop in England](#).

For how boiled sweets like these are made, see [how are boiled sweets made?](#), and for the powder itself, [what sherbet is made of](#). Our [SW035](#) are sold by the 100 g, with the full ingredients and allergen panel on the card.

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